The Wayback Machine - https://web.archive.org/web/20010304055143/http://communitypresbyterian.com:80/4900.htm

How to Fly Through the Fog of Life

Ephesians 2:1-10

Thomas Michael Smith
CPC 4/9/00

BACK TO MAIN SERMON PAGE

[reconstructed from notes]

Ephesians 2:8 says, "For by GRACE you have been SAVED through FAITH, and it is not your own doing; it is the GIFT of God." Grace, saved, faith, gift, four crucial Christian concepts. And four words that can lead to 'M.E.G.O.', an acronym for 'My Eyes Glaze Over.' Four essential words to really understand if we are to grow in our Christian faith, but four words which seem to have a steep learning curve.

Some months ago a famous personality suffered MEGO, and lost his life and the lives of two other people. John Kennedy, Jr., was flying his airplane to a wedding on Martha's Vineyard and got off to a late start. He was at 5500 feet and dusk came upon him. Flyers know what I mean when I say that the night, the sky and the sea merge at this time of day. It was also hazy and cloudy. There was no horizon and no stars to see, no way to get a sense of direction or pitch or angle. In such a circumstance, experienced flyers know that you can't trust your senses, you can't trust your eyesight or your inner ear. The plane may nudge to the right but you can't sense the change in direction. Flying blind, your eyes glaze over. Within fifteen seconds, the plane can drop 500 feet, turn 35 degrees, and enter a graveyard spin from which there is no escape. Since the body's senses are unsuited to 'see' such gradual turns, the pilot must rely on instruments.

It's the same with us. We are faith flyers, not sight flyers. So when we sense MEGO setting in, what saves us is not our feelings nor our eyes nor our inner ear, but what the instrument panel says, and the instrument panel for the Christian is the Word of God, the Bible.

Experienced pilots will tell you there are four basic concerns when flying blind. First, you must watch the altimeter, the gauge that measures how high you are from the land mass beneath. In verse six, Paul says we are people who are heaven-born, not earth-bound. Our calling is to be people who soar, who fly, now that the kingdom of God has come in the person of Jesus Christ. With the power of God available to us through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, we are not required to take the land route everywhere we go - we can pray and bring forth God's power in our lives and in the lives of those to whom we minister.

Second, we must note our airspeed. We are to stay within ourselves, and be mindful of how fast we move through life. If we get ahead of God, then that is presumption. If we get behind God, then that is disobedience. We need to stay with God, recognizing His lordship over our decisions.

Third, we must watch our heading. Once we become Christians by inviting Jesus into our life as Savior and as Lord, we give up control of our flight plan. The flight plan for our life is set for us by Another. Our job is to pick it up and get into the cockpit. We are to work the controls and get the plane airborne, recognizing that the power, the lift, belongs to God.

Fourth, we must note our attitude, that is, how level we are flying. There is a true story of an experienced pilot who was taking his small plane to another city and ran into a storm. To his horror, though he was instrument trained, his instrument panel malfunctioned, and he was flying completely blind. With some incredible measure of desperation, he looked around his cockpit, and spied a small glass jar. Quickly, he, well, he 'went to the bathroom' into the small jar, and being nervous, this was no problem. He then placed it atop the instrument panel, in front of the window, and watched it like a hawk, to make sure he was flying level. This way he was able to fly through the storm.

Flying level. In the fog. By faith. This is what the Christian life is all about. And one more thing. Karl Barth once compared the creeds and confessions of the church to the guardrails that border the narrow roads off the Swiss Alps. Only a fool with suicidal tendencies would want to drive across the Alps without guardrails. But it would be equally foolish to mistake the guardrails for the road; when we start driving on the rails, disaster is imminent. Jesus Christ is the Road, and the Bible is the light by which we are able to see clearly both the roan on which we travel and the guardrails that protect us from dangerous deviations.

By grace … I have been saved … through faith … (and it wasn't my own doing); it was a gift from God. The same is true of you. We fly by faith, not by sight, and we need to be reminded to use the instrument panel, the Word of God, in our daily lives, if we are to get to the destination God has laid out in His flight plan for us.

BACK TO MAIN SERMON PAGE

Copyright © 2000 Community Presbyterian Church, Vacaville, All rights reserved.